

DENVER OPPORTUNITY YOUTH INVESTMENT INITIATIVE

WHO ARE OPPORTUNITY YOUTH?

Denver's 16-24-year-olds who are disconnected from work or school

9,850

opportunity youth in Denver

*That's 1 in 7 of the total Denver youth population

MATCHING THE RIGHT TALENT TO THE RIGHT JOB

Opportunity youth are eager to further their education, enter the workforce and become a productive member of their communities.

Nationally, **5.8 million** young adults are out of school and seeking work

74% of jobs in Colorado will need a worker with some post-secondary credentials

40% of employers cite lack of skills as the main reason for job vacancies

HOW DO WE HELP THEM SUCCEED?

The Denver Opportunity Youth Investment Initiative connects youth with a navigator who will guide them to overcome their barriers, and provide assistance along the path to success.



First, the navigator will assess the skills of the youth to better serve their strengths and interests



The youth will further their education (GED, certificate, degree) with help from the navigator

The navigator will connect the youth with training and employee development to prep them for a job



Ready for work, the navigator will match and place a youth with a job at a local business

To ensure success throughout the placement, the navigator will connect youth with services such as: childcare, housing assistance, social services and mentorship to help them overcome their barriers



WORKFORCE INTERMEDIARY WORKS WITH BUSINESS PARTNERS IN:

Advanced Manufacturing
Business Services
Construction
Energy

Finance
Health Care
IT

Why focus on opportunity youth?

- The Aspen Institute has brought together a national movement around workforce and educational opportunities for this population
- Employers need good workers to fill vacant positions
- These youth all have potential and skills
- There is a movement out there that we need to capitalize on to maintain Denver and Colorado's competitiveness

Goal

A sustainable system of effective pathways to work and education that are coordinated and connected to each other and offer multiple on-ramps & long-term support

Current Initiative Investments

Over 25 partners

Current Investments

- Emily Griffith GED+ Pilot
- Zero Dropouts – Workforce Navigator
- Chamber – Backbone & Workforce Intermediary
- WorkLife Partnerships - Post-Employment supports

Returns to the Community

- Systems building effort
- Community partnerships with organizations that provide the supports
- Attracting local and national investment to help provide trainings, credentialing, boot camps, etc.

Returns to the Business/Employer

- Creating a robust pipeline of the company's next generation of local talent
- Fills critical skills gaps
- Increase workforce diversity that enables greater customer connection
- Spurs innovation

Managing Risk

- **To the employer** – Ensuring a stable and job/career ready supply of candidates
- **To the community partner referring the youth**
 - Ensuring employers understand and have the supports in place to make the job match with youth successful

Traditional thought

Traditional thought

- I don't know where to start.
- It's risky and costly.
- They don't have the skills.
- I don't see my company's role in this.



OY Pipeline supports

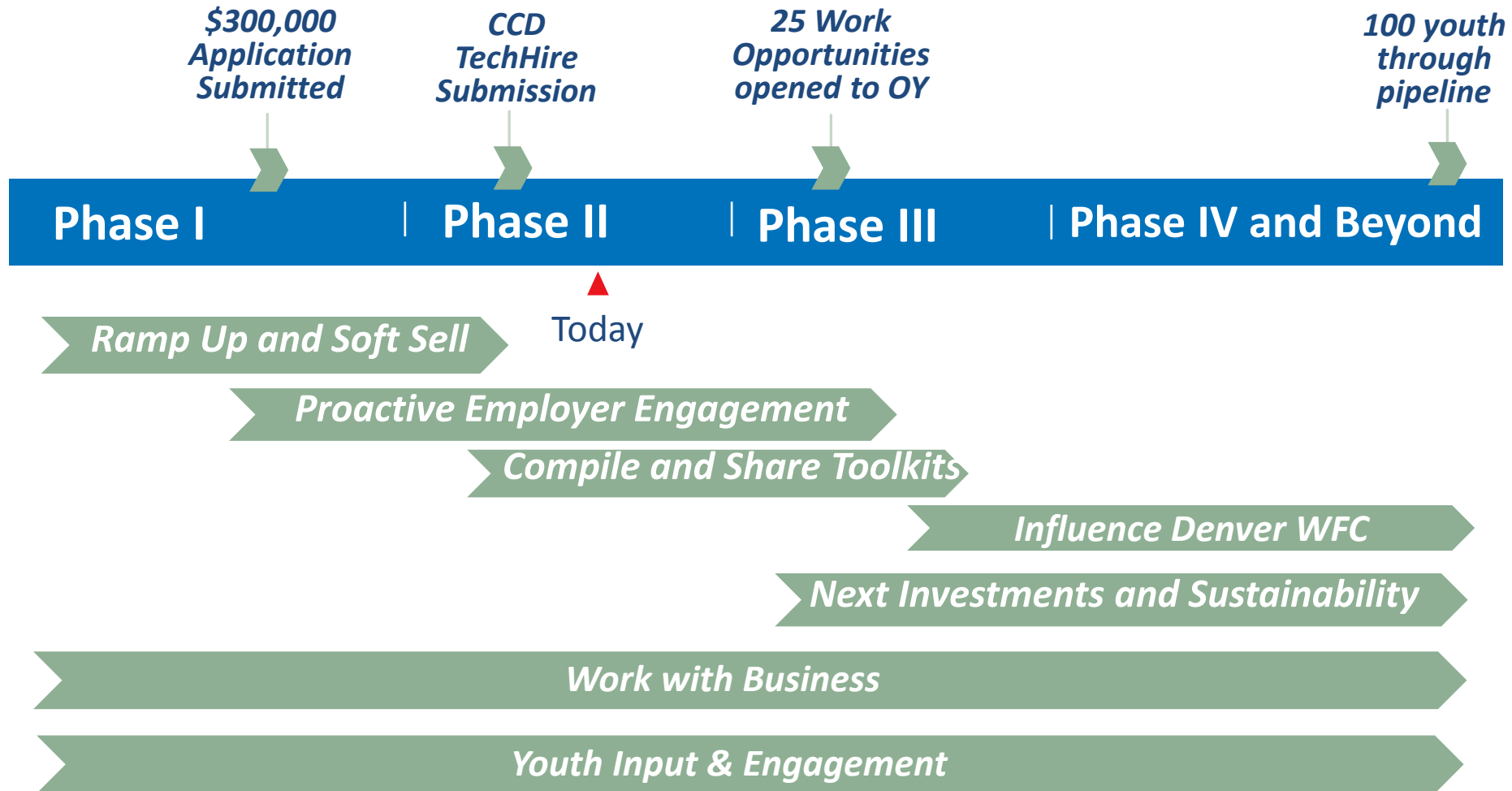
- Talent pipeline director is here to help.
- System of supports are in place to reduce initial risk and cost to employers
- Work with employers to right size the jobs.
- From being active in creating opportunities, to just being listed as a good fit for youth.



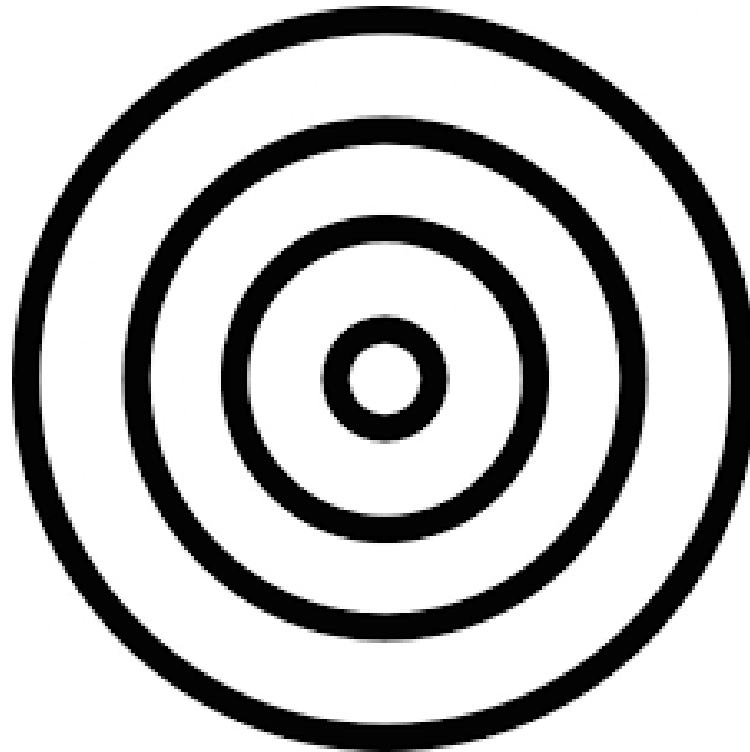
Chamber Sample Experiences

- Logo competition and paid internship with design agency
- Intern with our awesome events team

OY Timeline



Expanding the Sphere of Influence



What's Next

- Link youth employment strategy to your business strategy and find champions
- Expand talent sources
- Examine business policies that inhibit youth hiring
- Prioritize soft skill development
- Measure and Improve over time
- Identify and recognize youth employment champions
- Partner with Workforce Centers

What We've Learned from Businesses

- Soft Skills are one of the critical skills that are missing for many of our entry and middle skills jobs.

What else do you need?

Questions?

Key Partners

- DPS & Emily Griffith
- Colorado Youth for a Change – CYC
- Local Foundations – As Funders and participants
- Mile High Youth Corp
- WorkLife Partnership
- Community College of Denver
- Denver Scholarship Fund
- CO Department of Education
- Goodwill
- Mile High United Way
- CO Public Television